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DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

FUNERAL OF REV. JOHN PIERCE, D. D.

TOGETHER WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

FROM THE CHRISTIAN INQUIRER.

[Published by request.]



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**Printed by Andrews & Prentiss,
11 Devonshire Street.**

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

FUNERAL OF REV. JOHN PIERCE, D. D.

SENIOR PASTOR

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BROOKLINE, Mass.

AUGUST 27, 1849.

— *Veronica*
BY FREDERIC N. KNAPP,
Colleague.
—

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DISCOURSE.

It almost seems as if any words but those of prayer and of the Scriptures were untimely now, for he himself, around whom we have gathered, yet speaketh to us. But it was his desire that, according to the custom of former days, a discourse be given — feeling, as he said, that thereby his departure might, perhaps, be more effectually sanctified to his friends and people. And among his last requests, he said to me, ‘When you gather with my friends around my remains, read to them those cheering words of Jesus’: — “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me,

shall never die.” ‘And say to my people,’ he continued, ‘that *my* faith and hope are there; that I do not feel that I shall ever die, but only pass on to a higher life. And beseech them,’ he added, ‘beseech them, if they love me, and would express their love, to do it by remembering me, while they seek Christ as their Saviour, and strive to live as his disciples.’ — This is his message to you.

With those words, then, we will connect our thoughts at this time. They are recorded in the eleventh chapter of John, 25th and 26th verses. They are the words of Jesus, as he draws near, with Martha, to the grave of Lazarus.

This is his message to you. In accordance with which, I feel that we ought to make this an occasion for recalling, in the most simple manner, what we have loved and revered in him, that we may hear his voice still exhorting us, and learn its meaning. And thus we shall be led to ask concerning that faith, which gives such holiness to life, and such a joyful, childlike assurance

to the soul that lives in Christ, that it shall never die.

We turn then to the early life of him, who has entered upon that life where the spirit cannot grow old. For when one has gone on thus, bearing with him the years that reach back so far, it is something more than curiosity that leads us to turn our eye upon his past days. Early receiving the impressions which are cherished in a religious home, his youth was marked by that purity of life and kindness of heart, which never left him. An earnest love of knowledge and unwearied application enabled him to enter upon a college course, which he completed with especial honor, bearing with him an unblemished moral and religious character, the love of his fellow students, the esteem of his instructors, and the highest testimony of successful study.

He had early chosen the ministry as his profession. In fact, he states in his journal that he could scarcely look back to the time when it was not his highest thought and earnest desire to be a minister of Christ. But he points to the death

of his mother, which occurred during his last college year, as the time when he was called especially to consecrate his heart to the cause of religion; feeling that the voice, which he had loved on earth, now joined with voices from heaven. Many entries in his private papers, during these earlier years, reveal a most tender and watchful consciousness, and a constant recognition of his duty and relation to God.

After the usual preparation, he entered upon the ministry; and, about the same time, received an appointment to the office of Tutor in the University. Soon after he commenced preaching, a cordial invitation was given him, by this society, to settle with them. It was more than half a century ago. He entered upon his work with a prayerful sense of its obligations. His earnest and most heartfelt desire to bless his people then commenced, and has ever since continued; and now he has left them, not because his interest in them has failed, or their love of him has grown cold, but because Jesus had another home prepared for him, and so God

gently led him up thither. And you all know how trustingly he took the hand which was reached out thus to lead him. It was of a familiar presence. He had known God, had long been with him; had walked with Jesus, as he revealed the Father; known him so well, as to trust in him; so that his most frequent utterance of late has been, "Thy will be done;" — known God so well, and all his ministries, that he had learned to see in the dark-robed angels, bearers of love, heralds of glad tidings.

To the ministry upon which he entered, he brought those qualifications of heart to which we have referred. His mind was clear and strong, but more inclined to plain reasoning than metaphysical subtleties; more employed in gaining accurate and well arranged knowledge, than with the investigation of theories, seeking the experimental part of religion, rather than the philosophical.

The subjects that came before him he examined with candor, and decided upon with justice; and when circumstances made decision difficult,

he was always inclined to the side of charity. Benevolent and forgiving in temper, he had very many friends, and scarce any enemies. Cheerfulness and affability made him always a welcome visitor. His memory was remarkable for its strength and accuracy. It was often appealed to in social reminiscences and general inquiries, and received as having the certainty of a tabular record. To this was joined a peculiar fondness for statistical knowledge. And as this was so marked, it seems proper here to mention that it was not a mere love of recording facts and events, without the expectation that some good might come from it. Beside which, we are to notice, that in those copious records, though the world furnishes so much of evil and wrongdoing, which might be noted down against it, yet a great majority of his pages bear witness to the fact of how kind a heart dwelt within him, as he seemed to find his especial pleasure in recording good deeds, and expressions of love, and charitable works, and letters of friendship; always noting with peculiar care whatever he thought

might in any way concern the welfare of the Church of Christ. Whatever else he *remembered*, he *forgot not* God and his law of love.

As a minister of the Gospel, he was a sincere believer in its great truths; he felt its inestimable worth, and sought to awaken others to listen to the words of Jesus, and seek him as their Saviour. His sermons were plain and practical, marked by justness of thought and clearness of expression. Few men were more conscientious and scrupulous in their views of the Christian character, or had greater reverence for consecrated things and places.

His faith was sufficiently indicated by the clergymen with whom he most associated and sympathized; although he was unwilling to adopt the name of any denomination. He wished for no narrower, or more definite name than that of Christian. He found true fellowship with those of every faith. In view of the many opinions and speculations upon the Scriptures and spiritual things, that had sprung up since the commencement of his ministry, he was thus cau-

tious of what he might admit or deny. But though he would take no name, let it not be supposed that he did thus because lacking a definite place and idea, and so was unwilling to make the sacrifice that such a step might require. His connection with the liberal party was sufficiently positive and definite to cause him many sacrifices. He so far identified himself with them, that for many years he was cut off from old associations; was denied the exchange of pulpits with those to whom he was much attached, but who could not approve his position; he was involved with those from among whom opinions were brought forth, which none lamented more than himself, though he had to share in the censure which they brought with them. He lamented them, we say; for, much as he felt it, he never met them with severity or unkindness. Thus there must have been something positive and definite in his intent. But very evident it is, that he connected himself with those he did, not because he sought a form of theology, but because he sought a spirit of life,

which he thought he was to find there. This latter was always his strongest tendency ; his mind was not one that took any especial satisfaction in defining to itself, or obtaining from others, theological dogmas.

Concerning his conservatism, in some regards, it was not from want of the courage, which might be called for in practical works, nor from an unwillingness to receive newly developed truths, but from an extreme caution lest error, which he himself might not be able to disprove, should insinuate itself in the guise of truth. He was deeply interested in the steady, healthy progress of knowledge, right, and moral excellence ; but from a hope that the established means would ultimately produce the desired effect, he felt a reluctance to be the advocate of any more direct measures of reform. And then, doubtless, his exceeding love of peace and harmony also led him to maintain this position ; unwilling to place himself where he might perhaps be unconsciously drawn into the conflicts of party.

Very many literary and humane societies, for the diffusion of knowledge, for placing the Bible in destitute families, for relief of orphans, for promotion of temperance, for the cause of peace, bear witness to his desire to secure the improvement and happiness of man. His opinions, connected with all such subjects, were regarded as benevolent and just. From his clerical brethren he received numerous marks of respect and love. His relations, private and official, to Harvard College, were an evidence of peculiar devotion of heart to his Alma Mater, and of confidence reposed in him by the wise and good. The fact that his presence was welcomed by so many beside his own people, is a testimony to the benevolent interest which he felt in others. When the winter of age had crowned his head with snowy whiteness, his affections retained the warmth of summer;—children were delighted with his coming, and to every one those whitened locks seemed to bring with them a hallowed benediction.

Such was the relation he sustained to the community around him. To the town he was as its founder, and its depository of the past. Few can look back to the time when he did not walk among them as their religious father, and as one interested always in whatever promoted the moral improvement of this village. For fifty years he was actively engaged in the concerns of its public schools; and in behalf of temperance here, as elsewhere, he was a most zealous advocate.

To the parish he was such, that the love and confidence of his people, for so long a time, bear witness, that he walked before them in truth and with a perfect heart; striving by word and deed, by counsel and consolation, according to the full measure of grace God gave him, to minister to the blessing of those entrusted to his charge. And although one generation and almost another of those whom he labored for, have passed away, bearing so much of his love with them, yet his interest in this flock was never stronger, or more frequently expressed, than during his last days.

Morning and evening, at his family altar, when his prayers were feeble, did he still pray to God for this people with deep feeling—even as for his own children. And it was this same feeling which made his relation of Senior Pastor with a colleague so fruitful of harmony and peace—a relation which is not always thus. Of this, perhaps, I should not speak; but my heart bids me express its gratitude, and bear witness to the sincere and cordial welcome with which he received me—to the kind consideration with which he directed all his words and plans—to the unceasing affection and tenderness with which he ever watched over me—verily, it was as a father with a son.

As a friend, as a husband, as a parent—concerning that we could not say too much; yet we need but point to his kindness of heart and to that family altar, where the daily prayers he uttered were the spirit of his daily life. God blessed him in those given him, and in return he gave to them the richest blessings of a Christian home.

And we must look now to that home, if we would see him in his last days. And truly it is a holy sight. He who had always taken especial satisfaction in his energy and bodily activity, receiving so willingly, and without thought of complaint, a disease which thus confined him. Such sudden restraint to such an one was no easy thing to bear, especially when it told him that his days were numbered. Yet who of the very many that visited him there did not feel refreshed and strengthened by the sight of his cheerfulness, and the evidence he gave of a childlike, simple trust in the goodness of God, in this his providence. It was not the spirit of mere submission, it was something more—more Christian—it had trust and gladness in it.

And verily it is no small thing that one does when he sets before men thus a childlike simplicity of faith, producing a strong manliness. An example of the power of Christ's spirit it is, which we are led thereby not merely to approve, but to love, and strive for its attainment.

And the unceasing and multiplied expressions of friendship, which from so many and various sources visited him with every possible attention that tender affection could suggest, during these months of his confinement, was a holy tribute to the power of *goodness*. It was not because of eloquence, nor because of public honors — nor was he a theologian or a partizan, but he was a *good man* — it was because of goodness. There is *power* in it. Yes, here was his peculiar power. In that we find an answer to the question, which is one of deep interest and real importance to be considered, how it was that he was so widely known, and to such a remarkable degree claimed the interest of all who knew him.

The thought of death had no shade of gloom to him. He saw that his end was very nigh. It was but the last minute previous to his final unconsciousness, when one, whose tender sympathy has long cheered him, asked for what he would have him pray, that he answered with a happy calmness, "For submission to the will of God." While joining in that prayer he fell asleep in

Jesus. Like a sleeping child he quietly breathed awhile, and then we saw that his spirit had waked in heaven. The thought of death had no shade of gloom to him; and I doubt not, when he was borne up to this house, a few days ago—but the Saturday before his death—to perform his last public act—to dedicate that organ to the praising of God—that, if he had then known that almost its first tones would have been for his funeral service, he would have felt not less, but more, gladness of heart.

Turning, then, to that home, a peculiar peace seems to belong to his closing hours. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” Such peace it was that Jesus promised to give to his disciples. And I rejoice that those words which he chose for this occasion refer us to a scene of peculiar peace and quiet—a home scene—sisters, brothers, friends; such simplicity of friendship that the message to Jesus was only this, “He whom thou lovest is sick;” such friendship, that in sympathy for their grief, Jesus wept; such

friendship, that the thought of the home in Bethany always brings up the image of Jesus at evening—Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus leaning on his bosom, while he breathes upon their hearts the peace of heaven. I rejoice that these words, chosen by him, connect themselves with such a scene of holy quiet and peace,—a home scene; for such was peculiarly the association connected with the last thoughts of him who has just now left us. During these past months, the young and the aged have continually gathered in his study, bringing offerings of affection, and receiving in return wise counsel and cheering sympathy. The little children came with hands full of flowers, parents and friends with hearts full of love. How many will treasure up, as their Pastor's last and best gift, the words and spirit there breathed forth. How many, too, will remember his words, when, as Saturday night came, friends gathered in his study or around his bed, and joined in those sweetest hymns. Always delighting in music, his soul now seemed so lifted up by it, he seem-

ed to draw so near to heaven, while he spoke of the joy awaiting those who shall join in the song of the redeemed, that many hearts, I know, dedicated themselves there anew to Christ.

A peculiar childlike simplicity of trust was spoken of, which belonged to his last hours. Let us, therefore, one moment now, as seems fit, seek for the source of this, by considering those words of which he said, 'My faith and trust are there, — I do not feel that I shall ever die.' For we would recognize in this expression of his, nothing less than the life of a soul, which through Christ has become a partaker of the promises. The work of Christ in regard to this, then, is not merely to assure us that we shall continue to exist, after this apparent cessation of being; that kind of continuance of which the resurrection is the type; but the creation of a deep-seated, earnest consciousness of that spirit within ourselves which we feel cannot die, — a consciousness which we reverence, and dare not question, it seems so like the uttered voice of God. He that believeth on the Son of God,

hath the witness in himself. Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit that he has given us; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit. That word, "Thy brother shall rise again," was not the best assurance Jesus gave the sisters;—he gave them of his *spirit*; then their assurance was not, "He shall rise again," but, "He shall never die!"

This childlike faith to which we refer, is not a deduction of reason. The child in its mother's arms does not feel safe because it knows it is its parent's duty to protect it, or it has received a promise; but it simply feels that harm cannot come to it while it is there. Ask it why, and it simply says, Is not this father or mother who is near me? This is its only reasoning. So of this assurance, such as we have at this time been led to consider, that death shall not bring any harm to us, the soul must have this deep-seated consciousness of a relation to God which does not ask a reason, but trusts a feeling. Not but it may have the clearest answer—pointing to Jesus, the Redeemer—to give to those who

demand a reason for the faith that is in it; but where its faith is so essentially connected with the very existence of the soul, that for *itself* it trusts a feeling—calls God, in filial simplicity, Father! and then has the assurance, knows, that no harm can come to it,—that it may sleep awhile in its Father's arms, but only to wake in a brighter home. Such are the homes that Jesus has prepared for us, by thus redeeming us from sin, giving us hearts of purity, and the consequent trust of children. Except there is that inner consciousness, not all the outward arguments that God could display on earth, or in a hereafter made visible now, could give the faith we seek. The former might induce reason, with calm deduction, to say, Can we deny such evidence? behold the witnesses! The other causes the heart, with the eagerness of impulse, without looking downward for a deserted sepulchre, or upward for an open heaven, to grasp, as it were, the hand of God, and exclaim, Because He lives, I shall live also!—a faith which feels that its life is so hid—absolutely hid, wrapped

up—hid with Christ in God, that except God die, it cannot die.

Such is the faith which the vital presence of Christ's spirit in the heart gives to man; which does not come and go, but abides with him, even unto the end. The life and death of many men have borne witness to it. Another witness has now been added. Yes, his was *peculiarly* this free, simple, childlike faith. Many remarked it; all, who saw him, felt it.

We have dwelt thus somewhat at length upon this point, not only because the words of our text force it upon us, but because we would show that this calm peace and faith, which we have lately witnessed, though it did not constantly make an appeal to theological doctrines, did yet result from a deep religious experience, and was not the result of mere native temperament. And we also dwell upon it, because it makes more obvious the foundation for our remark, that he connected himself with those he did, not because he sought a form of theology, but a spirit of life.

If we recognized more fully this law of life through Christ, we should estimate more truly the depth and worth of such holy trust as crowned these departing days; and we should never once dread the working of that other law, which merely takes from us our present form of body, that we may be clothed upon anew, — a law as beneficent as that which first gave us bodies suited to us here. Nor should we then be unwilling to sow in tears, for the assurance would be ours, that we were to reap in joy; — since such tears are as holy dew of heaven, to water the seed. Knowing, too, that he who goeth forth, and weepeth, bearing precious seed with him, shall doubtless return again with rejoicing, bringing the sheaves with him.

God grant that this time of mourning may be thus fruitful to us all of blessing. May the aged, who loved their Pastor as one even that ministered to their fathers, and was religious light and consolation in their earliest homes, be reminded of him this day, that their time of departure also is near at hand; and may they seek that arm of

the Saviour that he sought to lean upon. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

And may these children of his flock hear his familiar voice, telling them that it seems but a day since he was like to them, and yet now he departs an aged man. May they listen to his words beseeching them to love Jesus Christ. And may they see, in the life just closed, a bright and cheering witness to the honor, and peace, and tranquil joy that belong to those who, from their youth, fear the Lord.

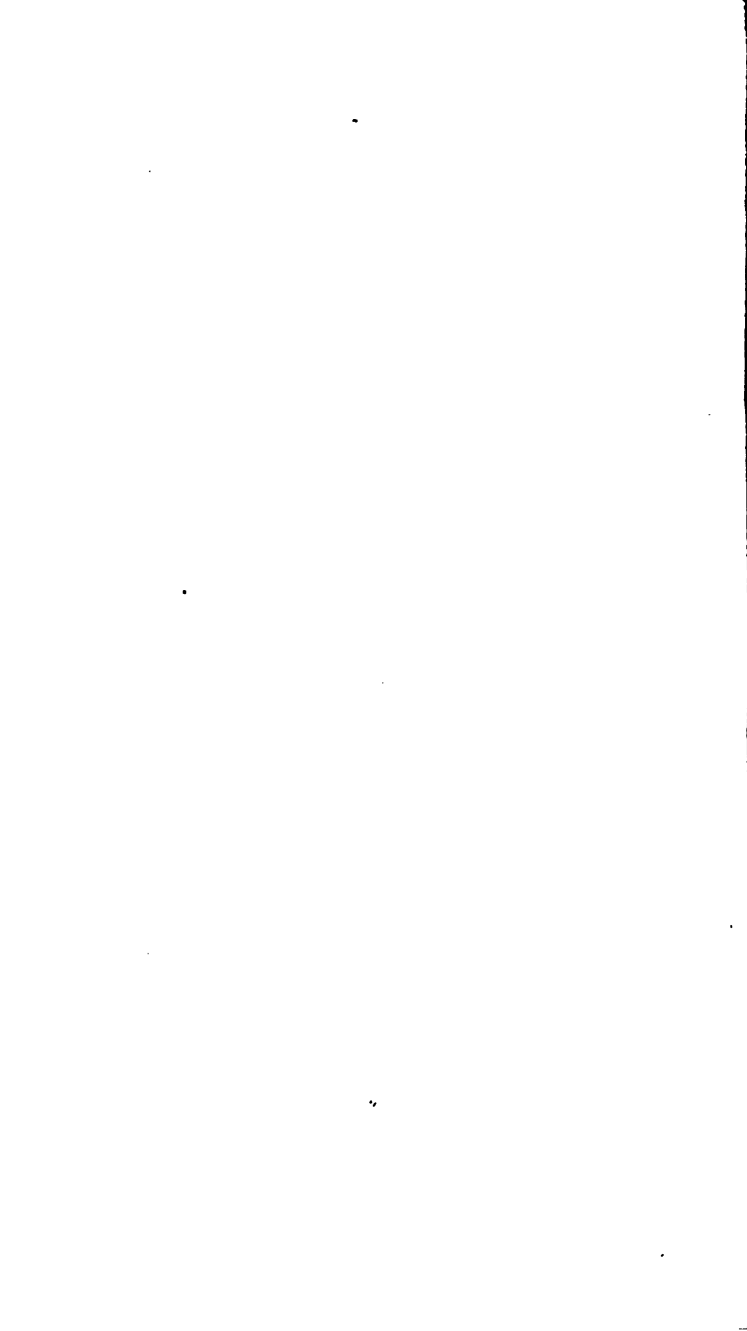
And may all this people long keep his memory fresh with them ; and look upon him as the good shepherd who has gone before his flock, ready to receive them, that they may lie down in green pastures and be led beside the still waters.

Thus let us look upon him ; for I feel that simply thus to dwell upon the life of a good man is better than to have entered into a discussion of the mysteries of Godliness.

And how can we offer more abiding consolation to those friends, who are bound to him by

the most tender ties, that bind hearts on earth, than thus to look awhile with them upon his life and the nature of his trusting faith; while we repeat for them those words of Jesus, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." For they must then feel assured that verily he who has left them is not dead — shall never die. And what shall they ask more than the assurance of soon being with him again in that better world. May his faith give them this consolation, while his voice thus calls them up thither.

Let all who drink of this cup of sorrow — those who drink most thereof — forget not to thank God, joyfully, for the many blessings that are mingled with it. Seldom does one go hence who can say as did this aged servant of Christ, "Every prayer of my heart has been answered." He went hence "in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." Let us listen to that voice from heaven, which saith, "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord."



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE

REV. JOHN PIERCE, D. D.

LATE SENIOR PASTOR OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN BROOKLINE, MASS.

By Thomas Bayley Foy.

[Re-printed from the Christian Inquirer (New York) for Sept. 1, 1849.]

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1849.

SKETCH.

ALTHOUGH the event has been, for several weeks, anticipated as drawing near, we hardly thought that before the "Interesting Incident"* connected with the trial of a new organ, mentioned in the last *Inquirer*, met the eyes of our

* AN INTERESTING INCIDENT. — A new organ has been placed in the new church at Brookline, Mass. On Saturday last, the 18th inst., there was quite a gathering at the "opening" and trial of the instrument. The venerable senior pastor, now too feeble to walk or ride, was borne to the church in a chair, by several of his devoted friends, (young parishioners,) to listen to the music, of which he is passionately fond. On this occasion Dr. Pierce read passages from the Scriptures, and a Hymn, and joined, as of old, most heartily in the singing of the latter. At his special request, the tune—which he said was the best that ever was, or ever would be made—of OLD HUNDRED was sung by the assembly, all standing excepting the Doctor himself, who cheerfully remarked that he no longer belonged to the "rising generation." This incident is but one of many, not so public, which have occurred to make the closing days, of one widely known and as widely loved, among his brightest and best days. May no shadow or cloud obscure the setting of his sun—but as the outward man perishes day by day, may the pure affections and genial sympathies of the heart continue, as they have thus far done, to flow forth and vindicate their own immortality.—*Christian Inquirer*, Aug. 25.

readers, the subject of it would cease to be numbered among the dwellers upon earth. But so it has happened. The Rev. JOHN PIERCE, D. D., Senior Pastor of the First Church in Brookline, Mass., was removed from this world, on Friday, 24th inst., at half past eleven o'clock, A. M., having attained here the age of seventy-six years, one month and ten days.

This venerable clergyman was so generally known, so universally respected and beloved, and had such troops of friends of all ages and sects, in all parts of the country, that there are few, if any of our readers, who will not be interested in such biographical notices and reminiscences, as we have been able to collect and put together in the brief time at our command.

Dr. PIERCE was born in Dorchester, Mass., about four miles from Boston, July 14th, 1773. He was the oldest of ten children, six of whom still survive. His father, a shoemaker, and an honest, intelligent, religious man, died December 11th, 1833, aged ninety-one years, two months and eight days. From earliest childhood, he

cherished the desire to go to college and to become a minister — this desire being awakened, as he used to say, by hearing his parents, uncles, and aunts, talk so incessantly of their brother, James Blake, a promising young clergyman, who died just after he began to preach. On leaving the school of the same maiden woman who taught his mother to read, he commenced the study of Latin, and in 1789 entered Harvard College. He took a high rank in his class, and at graduating (1793) delivered the second English oration — the first being assigned to Judge (Charles) Jackson, the eminent jurist, still living. His whole college expenses amounted to \$296 06 — of which he had credit, as a beneficiary, for \$102 56.

On taking his second degree he pronounced the Latin valedictory oration. After quitting Cambridge, he was for two years assistant preceptor of the Academy in Leicester, Mass. He commenced (July, 1795) the study of theology, with Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris, then recently settled in his native town; was “approved” by

the "Boston Association," Feb. 22d, 1796, and preached for the first time at Dorchester, March 6th, 1796. Having preached in several places, and filled for nearly four months a tutorship in Harvard College, he received and accepted an unanimous invitation to become the Pastor of the First Church in Brookline, Mass., as the successor of Rev. Joseph Jackson, and was ordained March 15th, 1797. October 31st, 1798, he was married to Abigail Lovel, of Medway, one of his pupils at the Academy. She died July 2d, 1800, leaving an infant son, who survived his mother only two years. Dr. Pierce was married again, May 6th, 1802, to Lucy Tappan, of Northampton, who is now left his widow, after an union of the utmost harmony and affection extending through forty-seven years. They have had ten children, all but one of whom — a son — are still living. Dr. Pierce was the sole pastor of his church for half a century; and the interesting "Jubilee" when he completed the fiftieth year from the day of his ordination — celebrated March 15th, 1847 — will be remembered by the

many whose privilege it was to be present and listen to the hale, hearty, and cheerful clergyman, showing in his seventy-fourth year the vigor of youth. For thirty-one years of his ministry, the First Church was the only church in Brookline, and he was pastor of the whole town. Dr. Pierce was for fifty-two years a member of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, and for ten years its scribe. For thirty years he belonged to the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, and, of course, during the whole of his ministerial career, one of the "Boston Association," whose meetings he rarely missed. For thirty-three years he was Secretary to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College. For several years he was President of the Massachusetts Bible Society; and also a faithful officer or active member of numerous other associations of a literary or philanthropic character. He served on the School Committee during his whole ministry. He was among the very earliest advocates of temperance, and to the last of his days of activity, known of all for the

zeal and courage with which, in public and in private, he maintained, by speech and example, the doctrine of "total abstinence." He officiated on various public occasions; and in January of the current year, he delivered the "Election Sermon," as it is called, before the Executive and the Legislature of the State. This discourse, with several other of his addresses, mostly statistical and historical, has been published.

Rev. FREDERIC N. KNAPP was ordained as his colleague, Oct. 6th, 1847. But though thus relieved in a great measure from the care of his own pulpit, he continued to preach, with unabated strength, for many of his brethren, and to take part in various meetings, until the last spring.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND HABITS.

Dr. Pierce was a tall, large framed man, with a mild, open countenance, beaming with cheerfulness and benignity. His hair very early became almost white, and gave him an appearance of venerableness long before he numbered years

sufficient to justify the epithet. He enjoyed in youth and manhood, notwithstanding in infancy he was a feeble child, almost uninterrupted health; he remarked to the writer, during his last sickness, "that for nearly forty years he had not known what it was to have a physical infirmity worth naming." During his long ministry, he was kept from his pulpit only thirteen Sundays. In the spring of 1805, he was seized with a rheumatic fever, which confined him several weeks; and, it is a curious fact, that the celebrated Joseph Stevens Buckminster was ill at the same time, that both returned to their respective desks the same Lord's day, and preached from the same text, viz., Psalm cxix. 71. It was his invariable habit to rise early; in the winter, for two hours or more before breakfast, to saw and split his own wood, and in the summer to work in his vegetable garden. He was a great walker; frequently on his exchanges going on foot, out and back, six or seven miles the same day, and without fatigue. He was "temperate in all things," invariably making his

dinner, when at the most sumptuous and varied entertainment, from one dish, and that, usually, the plainest on the table. His beverage, for twenty years or more, was cold water, tea, and coffee. Simple in his tastes, and of the strictest integrity, Dr. Pierce was an economist. He brought up a large family, and laid up a portion every year, of an income never large, and at the commencement of his ministry amounting only to \$400, and sixteen cords of wood, per annum ; though it must not be forgotten, that his people from time to time increased, until they more than doubled his stipend, and also showed their regard for their pastor, by generous gifts. With all his frugality, however, he had no "*love of money*," and there was nothing narrow or mean about him ; on the contrary, he was most liberal and hospitable. To show how little he cared for riches, we may state, that, with all his proper inquisitiveness, there was one question he never asked, viz., what was a minister's salary ? and with all the tenacity of his memory, there was one fact it very seldom kept, viz., how much any

preacher received for his services. On one occasion he was stript, by an unfortunate investment made for him, of almost all the property he possessed ; but to appearance the loss did not disturb him for a moment, and it was months, we believe, before his nearest relations knew of it ; showing that his heart was where his treasures were, and that these were not laid up on earth. He never was oppressed with debt, and from the time of his second marriage, if not before, had, on the first day of every year, a year's salary and a year's stock of wood on hand, to begin with. He purchased many books, subscribed for many periodicals, spread his simple table with abundance, and yet made both ends meet, and had something to spare. A faithful domestic, and a coöperating partner, however, must share with him the credit of economical management. He greatly loved music ; was a fine singer himself, and enjoyed sacred tunes so much, that he would frequently, on exchanges, when he met with kindred tastes, spend the whole evening, after preaching all day, going through books of

psalmody. Among the many attentions paid him during his illness, few gave him so much delight as the weekly visits to the parsonage, on Saturday evenings, of his beloved choir; "his sweet psalmists of Israel," as he called them. Dr. Pierce's

SCHOLARSHIP AND LITERARY ATTAINMENTS

were, for one who enjoyed no better early advantages, and belonged to the "Old School," more than respectable. He made no pretensions to learning; and yet he had quite a correct knowledge of the classics as studied in his day. He wrote with accuracy; and we doubt whether an instance of mis-spelling or wrong punctuation could be found in his numerous manuscript sermons. From boyhood he was fond of reading; and with the best didactic, historical, and biographical literature of the times, he kept himself well acquainted. He loved to read aloud; and his family will long remember the many evenings, when his strong and manly voice gave them in-

struction or entertainment from some new book in that "dear old study," hung round with innumerable sweet memories of the past. His mind was a practical one—he had no taste for philosophical speculation; was wanting, perhaps, in depth of sentiment and imagination. But, if not an original thinker himself, he appreciated the best thoughts of others; and if he collected from abroad more ideas than he generated within, he generally knew how to select the truest, and best, and most useful. Indeed, we have sometimes thought that his reputation as a lover of facts, and his reverence for great writers who have become classic, together with the intense activity of his social nature, may have concealed, and so led to the underrating of his talents and acquirements, which, as they were shown in good sense, sound and discriminating judgment of men and things, were by no means inferior. Of his preaching—paradoxical as it may sound—we may, perhaps, safely say, had it been less scriptural or evangelical in phraseology—a characteristic which came from his implicit faith in,

and profound reverence for the Bible — it would have been found more original and thoughtful than some may imagine. We need not, however, dwell upon this point, for he was never ambitious of literary distinction; and certainly one of a moral and religious character so stainless, exhibiting a life of such uniform worthiness, can well spare the fame of the mere scholar, and wants not the praise of intellectual greatness as a claim to reverential respect. And that

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER,

who could, who did observe and study it — so guileless, simple, pure, upright, consistent, and humble — without giving it the silent homage of his heart? If any one might dare to cherish the hope of inheriting, through' the Father's mercy, the promises in the Beatitudes, our departed friend might. He was a Christian in his trustful faith, his sincere devotion, his endeavors to keep the commandments, if ever there was a Christian on earth. His domestic virtues made a happy

home. His integrity and truthfulness there were none to call in question. He was a peacemaker. He was genial, hearty, affectionate, cheerful, almost always and everywhere. He was thankful for his blessings, and resigned under all his trials, and overflowed with gratitude to heaven for his many years of happiness on earth — saying, as the shadows of the grave began to gather about him, “that he knew not how his life could have been better or pleasanter than a kind Providence had ordered it.” His boyhood was free from rudeness, vulgarity, and profaneness. His college days were unstained by vice, and he graduated without having received the slightest censure. His youth was pure; his manhood above reproach; to the moral beauty, the Christian trust of his old age, who that saw him will not bear willing witness? We doubt if he ever had an enemy; and we are sure there are none who can stand by his grave without saying, “Here reposes the dust which was once, and through a long pilgrimage, the garment of an honest and religious man.” He was highly fa-

vored, it is true, in his constitution, his temperament, his early training, and his prosperous lot in life; but those who knew him intimately, know that not a little which seemed so natural and spontaneous in his goodness, was the work of principle, the result of self-discipline, watchfulness and prayer, and religious habits of soul. But our purpose here, is not eulogy, and we will simply add that for uniform punctuality, for systematic diligence, for sincere and earnest endeavors to do his duty in all relations, for fine domestic qualities, for faithful exercise to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man, those who dwelt nearest to the subject of this notice, and who were best acquainted with whatever infirmities he may have had, will be the first to give him credit. Dr. Pierce was accustomed to speak of himself as a

MATTER-OF-FACT MAN ;

and as such he has been known, at least by everybody who lives near, or was a student in

Harvard College. There was almost as much truth as wit in the remark of the late Judge Davis, when—all other attempts to find out having failed, and Dr. Pierce could not tell the birth-place of a certain person—he said, “that it was no use to make further inquiries; for, if *the Doctor* did not know where the man was born, *he was not born anywhere.*”

The amount of dates and facts Dr. Pierce carried stored up in his memory and had ready for use whenever called for, was perfectly marvelous; and his knowledge, in this regard, was as accurate as it was extensive. He has been known, more than once to correct mistakes made by his friends, as to their own age and the day of their own nativity; and to catch him in an error about the time of any *minister's* birth, settlement, or death, after he had once ascertained it, or about the class to which a graduate of Harvard College belonged, was next to an impossibility. The whole “Triennial” was in his head; and the personal history of most of the clergy-

men in his own neighborhood and of his own denomination, he knew almost as well as he knew his alphabet. Then his "Memoirs and Memorabilia," eighteen quarto volumes, in manuscript, of six hundred pages each—his memoranda—his interleaved almanacs—his occasional discourses, falling on the ear, when heard, a perfect hail-storm of facts, and bristling, when read, all over with figures; these, containing accounts of commencements, exhibitions, ordinations, "jubilees," dedications, genealogies, and hundreds of other like matters, remain to show his industry, the innocent and useful ruling passion of his mind, and to be a treasury of information to those who shall come after him. Ah! how, as the business, matter-of-fact-man, in many societies, and on many occasions, he is yet to be missed! At the "Commencements" and "Anniversary-weeks" to come, how long it will be before that active, vigorous form, that interested countenance, and those snowy hairs, will cease to be remembered and mentioned!

The main direction which our venerable friend's fondness for facts took, leads us naturally to advert to his love of

HARVARD COLLEGE.

Venerable Alma Mater never dismissed a child from under her maternal wing, who cherished towards her greater filial affection and respect. He has told us that when a school-boy, he repeatedly walked from Boston to his home in Dorchester, through Cambridge and Roxbury, a distance of nearly or quite a dozen miles, merely that he might have the pleasure of looking at the College buildings! And this early regard for the University never grew cold. He attended sixty-three Commencements; in 1847, there were but twenty-one graduates alive who took their degrees when he was not present; and for fifty-four successive years he "set the tune" of St. Martin's to the hymn sung at the Commencement dinner. He was always alive to the interest and reputation of the University; and in his official

capacity, was a model of accuracy and punctuality; keeping the records and discharging all his clerical duties in the most faithful manner. For other collegiate institutions, also, he had a high respect; and as he found leisure, of late years, made it almost a business to attend their respective Commencements.

In speaking of Dr. Pierce

AS A PREACHER AND PASTOR,

we shall say nothing of his theological views, except that he uniformly refused to be classed with any sect whatever, or to take any names except those of a "Congregationalist" and a "Christian." He seldom preached doctrinal sermons. He had no taste for controversy; and hardly ever indulged in expressions of his belief, clothed in any other phraseology than that of the Bible. For any party to claim him as a member on account of his opinions, would be showing a sad want of respect to his memory, and an utter disregard of his well-known feelings and wishes

when alive. No one has any moral right to do for him that which he always refused to do for himself—class him anywhere as a theologian. He must be known simply as an “eclectic Christian,” to use his own terms; and if this phrase is indefinite, it must be remembered that it has all the precision which he desired. On one point we may, however, be very explicit. He set his face like a flint against every form of sectarian exclusiveness and bigotry, and was only intolerant towards those who ventured to judge any body of believers in Christ, and to deny them the Master’s name. Towards some views—more or less prevalent in New England of late years—he might have failed a little in preserving that “charity which is not easily provoked;” but on the whole, his catholicism was a marked trait in his character, which, often severely tried, was seldom found wanting. He was an earnest, plain preacher; dealing generally with practical subjects, without seeking originality of thought, or being remarkable for any graces of rhetoric. Perhaps, as we have already hinted, had his

quotations from Scripture been more sparing, his discourses would have gained in clearness and point. Alluding to this feature in his sermons, a friend remarked, lately, to us, that "Dr. Pierce certainly preached the Bible." But his style was that of former days; and few men have retained so much of their early acceptableness in the pulpit, owing to the impression he made upon his hearers of his own deep sincerity and unfeigned piety. You felt that he believed with his whole heart and soul everything he said, and was thoroughly in earnest. It was, however, by the daily beauty of his life as the faithful pastor, that Dr. Pierce won the confidence and affection of his people. He knew every man, woman, and child in his parish — the date of their births, and of all the important events connected with their joys or their sorrows. No one was ever forgotten or overlooked. With the same hearty simplicity he visited the rich and the poor, the refined and the unlearned; and though there were wide diversities in the social condition of the members of his society, there were none to

charge him with partiality, none to doubt his friendliness and ready sympathies. His social disposition led him to devote much time to visiting, and he went from house to house, as he did everything else, according to system.

SETTLEMENT OF A COLLEAGUE.

It is a difficult thing for a settled clergyman, advanced in life, especially if in vigorous health, to see, as soon as his parishioners and others may see it, that time and change have made it desirable that he should receive the assistance of youth, or retire, in a manner, from the active duties of his profession in the field of labor, so long entirely his own. To do this must have been peculiarly trying in the case of Dr. Pierce, unconscious as he was of any infirmity — hardly knowing, indeed, that he was growing old, except as the numerical increase of his years testified to the fact. But in this matter — after a little natural reluctance and hesitation — he met the demands of duty most conscientiously, yield-

ing up every personal consideration to promote the welfare of his parish. It was very fortunate for all parties that the society unanimously chose for his colleague the very individual upon whom, as he once told us, "without daring to express his feelings to any one, he had fixed his heart." "Fixed his heart," was indeed the right phrase; for no fond father, it seems to us, could have cherished a stronger affection or greater solicitude for the welfare and success of his own son, than did Dr. Pierce, to the day of his departure, for his young associate; and it is but proper to say that this paternal regard has been returned with filial respect and devotion; so that the change in his relations to his church, to which our venerated friend looked forward with much anxiety, became, after it took place, only another joy added to the many blessings with which his days were crowded.

But we must bring this imperfect and hasty sketch to a close, and we cannot do it better than by a brief allusion to the

LAST DAYS

of the subject of it; a full description of which would be the most suggestive eulogy of his worth that could be written. It was on the third of March that his illness commenced, with a sudden attack, which, for a few hours, threatened a fatal result. Relief, however, was obtained; but a gradual decay began, which, with intervals of apparent convalescence, finally closed his earthly career.*

Those who knew what pride Dr. Pierce seemed to take in his robust health, and how active were his habits, feared lest the trial of protracted disease and feebleness would prove to be almost too hard even for his patience. But he met this sudden change in his condition, as if to prepare for it had been the sole work of his life — as, indeed, in some sense it was, since now was brought forth the crowning ripeness of his Christian character. At once he set his “house in

* By the “post mortem” examination it was ascertained that the disease was a cancerous affection, which had reached the scirrhus stage.

order" — arranging all his temporal affairs, so as to leave his thoughts free for better things. Until within a few weeks, he rode out almost every pleasant day : and up to his last hours, the unspeakable satisfaction of continuing his records and of seeing and enjoying the society of his friends, was permitted him. It might be said, without much exaggeration, that he held a daily "reception ;" and some notion of the number of visitors who came to show their respect and affection, may be formed from the fact, that among them were *one hundred and twenty clergymen, representing seven different denominations*. The scene in his "study," from morning till evening, was beautiful beyond expression. Everybody, from the merest child up to the venerable and devoted parishioner of four score years — from the humble woman who insisted upon bringing with her own hands the ice-cream she prepared each day for his use, up to men high in station, and higher still in their reputation for worth and wisdom — everybody remembered the good man and beloved pastor.

Rare and fresh flowers loaded his table, and filled the silver vase, presented to him by the ladies of the *Baptist* Society, at his "jubilee;" all the delicacies of the season, and all manner of luxuries which it was thought might do him good, or please an appetite that disease had for the first time, made capricious, were poured around him in profusion. Many were ready, at a moment's warning, to read to him or write for him, or to discharge any office of kindness. In one word, wealth never purchased, and power never won attentions, of all kinds, so devoted and loving, as were gladly rendered, without stint, and in constant anticipation of his slightest wishes. Verily, he had his reward. The life-long expressions of his own genial and kindly nature — his own remembrance of all who needed his ministry — came flowing back, a rich harvest of reverent and affectionate service, to fill full with beauty and brightness the close of his days, and to consecrate, in the memory of multitudes, his humble parsonage, as a spot hallowed for months by the presence of unselfish

and unwearied affection ; and so it went on to the last. And how did he bear it all ? Like a meek, lowly, humble, Christian, with the simplicity and frankness of a child — with incessant and grateful wonder at the respect shown him — with the most entire submission to the Divine will — with a cheerful trust in God that took away all fear, and looked forward to the grave and eternity with the calm eye of assured religious hope.

Dr. Pierce failed very rapidly after his visit to the Church mentioned above ; but retained possession of his faculties and his consciousness, until Thursday evening. At that time, in addition to the members of his family and one or two neighbors, his colleague and his devoted friend, Rev. Mr. Shailer, of the Baptist church, in Brookline, whom he used playfully and affectionately to call his “ oldest son,” and with whom he enjoyed years of the most harmonious and confidential intercourse — were in attendance upon him. His last words were addressed to Mr. Shailer, in answer to an inquiry as to the manner

in which he would be remembered in the evening prayer, and those words were, "*Entire submission to the Divine will.*" Reclining in his easy chair, he lingered until the next forenoon, when, at half past eleven o'clock, with only one brief struggle, he fell asleep. *He died in the Lord, the death of the righteous. The end of that man was peace.*

THE FUNERAL SOLEMNITIES

at the interment of the remains of the Rev. Dr. PIERCE, took place at Brookline, Mass., on the afternoon of August 27th. At four o'clock the body* was borne from the parsonage to the church by several young men of the parish, attended by Rev. Dr. SHARP, of Boston, (Baptist,) Rev. Dr. KENDALL, of Plymouth, Mass., Rev. Dr. PARKMAN, of Boston, Rev. Dr. WALKER, of Harvard College, Rev. Dr. YOUNG, of Boston, Rev. Dr. BARRETT, of Boston, Rev.

* The new and beautiful church was not shrouded. A large and rich bouquet of white flowers stood on the font; and a wreath was placed upon the coffin by one of the children of the Sunday School.

Dr. PUTNAM, of Roxbury, Mass., and Rev. N. HALL, of Dorchester, Mass., as pall-holders, and followed by the relatives and clergymen of different denominations. The services commenced with the reading of a short devotional passage from the Bible, by Rev. Mr. HALL. The following hymn was then sung:

Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee ;
Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb,
The Saviour has passed through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of his love is thy guide through the gloom.

Thou art gone to the grave ; we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of the world by thy side ;
But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee,
And sinners may hope, since the Sinless has died.

Thou art gone to the grave, and, its mansions forsaking,
Perhaps thy tried spirit in doubt lingered long ;
But the sunshine of heaven beamed bright on thy waking,
And the song that thou heard'st was the seraphim's song.

Thou art gone to the grave, but 't were wrong to deplore thee,
When God was thy Ransom, thy Guardian, and Guide ;
He gave thee, and took thee, and soon will restore thee,
Where death has no sting, since the Saviour has died.

Rev. Mr. SHAILER, of the Baptist Church, Brookline, read the eleventh chapter of John. The Prayer was offered by the Rev. CHARLES LOWELL, D. D., Senior Pastor of the West Church, Boston, in compliance with the special

wish of Dr. Pierce, made before his departure. Rev. F. N. KNAPP — also by request — now sole Pastor of the Church, delivered the discourse. Having stated that it was the desire of the deceased, according to the custom of his earlier days, that a sermon should be delivered at his funeral, Mr. K. referred to one of his last interviews with his colleague, when he repeated these words: “I am the resurrection,” &c. &c., and said, “tell my people that my faith and hope are *here*. I feel that I shall never die; and tell my people, also, if they would express their love for me, to remember me whilst they seek Jesus as their Saviour.”

The preacher took the passage (John xi. 25) thus commended to their attention, as his text. He gave a brief, but just, discriminating and affectionate description of the character of Dr. Pierce — spoke of his fine home-qualities — his faithfulness as a pastor — the parental tenderness with which he had received and always treated the speaker — the Christian beauty of his last days of sickness, fitly closing the Christian

beauty of his long and active life. Interpreting the text as teaching that, as we partake of Christ's spirit, and imitate Christ's life, so we come to have a sure witness to our immortality within us,—Mr. K. said, we had had, in the child-like faith and cheerful submission of our venerable friend, another illustration of this truth, added to those given by the true disciples of Jesus from the beginning. The discourse was the simple tribute of the heart's admiration and love, paid to the memory of the excellent husband and father—the kind friend—the conscientious minister—the beloved pastor—the upright, honest, devout, and humble man; and as such, met the occasion, and harmonized with the feelings of all who heard it. The choir then sung:

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
To slumber in thy silent dust.

No pain, no grief, no anxious fear,
Invade thy bounds; no mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
Whilst angels watch its soft repose.

So Jesus slept ; God's dying Son
Pass'd through the grave and bless'd the bed ;
Then rest, dear saint, till from his throne
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

Break from his throne, illustrious morn !
Attend, O grave, his sovereign word !
Restore thy trust ; the glorious form
Will then arise to meet the Lord.

and a short prayer was offered by Rev. N. HALL. The services at the church being over, the body, preceded by the Sunday School and members of the parish, and followed by the relatives and other friends, was taken to the beautiful little cemetery near by, and there, after a few words of devout supplication from the surviving pastor, was consigned to the grave just at sunset—reminding us of those well-known lines of the lamented Peabody :

“Behold the Western evening light,
It melts in deeper gloom ;
So calm the righteous sink away,
Descending to the tomb.”

The attendance at the funeral was very large ; the church was crowded, and many were unable to enter it at all during the services. Besides a numerous body of clergymen, and other friends and associates of the deceased, there were

among the audience the two Ex-Presidents and the present Head of Harvard College ; showing that our friend was held in due honor, where, of all places, next to his home and his parish, he would most wish to be remembered.

We cannot refrain from bearing our testimony here to the generous treatment—the thoughtful and tender kindness shown by the religious society to their venerated pastor whilst living ; and the sincere respect paid to his memory after his death.

It may not be out of place to mention two or three interesting facts connected with the burial of Dr. Pierce. Monday forenoon, an old lady, upwards of eighty years of age, walked from Roxbury to Brookline, to see Dr. P., whom she expected to find living ; but she had only the sad satisfaction of looking upon his face just before it was to be hidden forever from mortal sight. A venerable aunt of the deceased, who held him in her arms when he was an infant, and who is now in her eighty-seventh year, rode from Dorchester to attend the funeral, was

present throughout all the services, and returned home safe and well the same evening. The venerable Deacon Robinson, who has been an officer of the church for fifty-one years, and with whom, as his delegate, Dr. Pierce had, up to March, 1847, sat in council at ordinations, and on other occasions, fifty-three times, took his appropriate place at the funeral solemnities, showing, to the last, that friendship for his pastor, which has existed, unbroken and undisturbed, for more than half a century.



